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sumed that ten is the largest number of traps possible at that weir. Those who have the right to that weir are the members of the ancestral family with the names of those first users. At this point the logic of the Bella Coola fails to uphold the mythological pattern. No salmon-weir has remained in existence since the beginning of time; when one broke, owners were sometimes infants, and those who repaired the break became regarded as the rightful possessors. The system of ownership prevailing at the time of abandoning the weirs, was that *individuals*, not groups, had rights to certain sections of the weir which were willable like other personal property. In most cases this right was transmitted with a name, marking the section of weir, which had to be duly validated by presents. In other cases, the intangible ownership was willed without any mark whatever.[1] Unless bequeathed in this way, disputes were frequent. Rights of this kind were never sold although an owner often leased his section for a night, or longer period, receiving goods in return, and not forfeiting his ownership thereby. This was particularly common when the renter was planning to give a potlatch. No case was heard of in which the right to a certain section of salmon-weir was given to a non-member of the ancestral family. Theoretically, this was possible, but practically it would be so inconvenient that it is most unlikely ever to have occurred, since the Bella Coola is never such a slave to legal privileges that he fails to be guided by common sense.

Although individual ownership is thus recognized with regard to sections of salmon-weirs and suitable places for olachen-nets, the owner is bound to share his haul. When he catches a large number of fish, anyone, whether related to him or not, can demand some. He cannot refuse, since to do so would brand him as selfish. The effective check on this system

[1] Great difficulty was experienced in learning about the distribution of rights to sections of salmon-weirs. The evidence is conflicting, and though every effort was made to verify and check the above, there may be further regulations which were not learnt.

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performance of rites of this kind. But sociological and ethical concepts, shown at their highest development in the potlatch, are not limited to a few weeks of the year, or to any class of the community. Generosity on a large scale can be publicly displayed by chiefs alone, but to a lesser degree this virtue must be practised by everyone, since avarice is considered a major sin. Anyone who happens to pass a house in which a meal is taking place must be invited to share it; to do otherwise would be considered rude. The person summoned must take at least a trifle to show that he is not churlish and too proud to eat with his host, while if he is hungry, he shares whatever is being served as a matter of course. The head of the family should be the first to taste any wine[1] as proof that it is not poisoned, but otherwise he fares little, if any, better than his guests. This custom is now rapidly falling into disuse through the construction of individual family houses with doors and locks. The fisherman who has exclusive rights to a suitable place for netting olachen or salmon must give some of his catch to anyone who asks him. If he has landed four salmon, the first solicitor is given one, later comers, none at all. When a net is set in the river, anyone passing is allowed to raise it and take some of the contents; if there are two fish, he may remove one, if many, three or four. To take all would be a despicable theft, sufficient to brand the transgressor as greedy; hence public opinion prevents the system from being carried to excess. A hunter who brings back several mountain goats or other large game is expected to invite his neighbours to a feast, which virtually means that he must share his takings.

Presents of this kind increase the prestige of the donor who has thus acted in accordance with Bella Coola ethics, and are advantageous investments since others must reciprocate. The system is carried to such lengths that, until recent years, it was more profitable to give away goods than to sell them. In the case of a sale, the purchaser endeavours to give as little as possible, whereas the recipient of a gift returns as much as

[1] This is a modern practice, dating from the introduction of home-brew.

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provided with means of sustenance, a house, and certain supernatural powers. The right to the names of these people, as well as to the type of ceremonial objects used by them, has been the privilege of their descendants. But these early Bella Coola, like their modern descendants, had several designations, each carrying with it a definite prerogative. In a single myth there may be embodied a dozen or more names and incidents which are quoted at the present day to authorize such different phases of culture as dances, rights to hunting-grounds, professions, names of dogs, or *kusiut* prerogatives.[9] Any myth which gives the initial use of a name, a dance, or any other prerogative, is termed a *smaiusta*. Each of these is, or was in the old days, remembered with great care and never recounted in full detail except to the members of the ancestral family whose names are embodied in it. Even at potlatches the full details of the myth are not laid bare. Indeed, if a young man is of a flighty, garrulous disposition, unlikely to preserve the dignity of his ancestral fame, the details are concealed from him. Even at the present time there is much resentment at any unauthorized use of a *smaiusta*, and in the old days this would inevitably have led to bloodshed.

Boas (p. 116) states that the terms *smaiusta* and *simsma* are synonymous. The writer feels certain that this is an error. It was discussed repeatedly with various Bella Coola, all of whom agreed that a *simsma* is a mere story which can be told by anyone, whereas a *smaiusta* is a myth possessed by the individual, or individuals, whose prerogatives are derived from it. To the Bella Coola the two are utterly different.

None the less, there is no doubt that records of the past change from one category to the other. A wealthy chief, eager to give a potlatch, but lacking the mythical authorization, must frequently have used a *simsma*, claiming the hero as an ancestor. There would be veiled amusement at him for doing so, but the prestige of one who can give potlatches is so great that in time his claim would probably be accepted. The two

[9] The details of these will be described later.

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versions of the myth given (vol. I, pp. 313-19) is a case in point. The first was told as a *smaiasta* by a woman who claimed to be a descendant of the people figuring in it; the second, as a story, *tsnema*, by a man. In view of the reliability of both informants, it seems highly probable that this is a story, partly converted to a myth. In other examples there are incidents resembling the supernatural tales given in vol. I, chap. IX, and here too it appears probable that *tsnema* have been assimilated into *smaiasta*. It is complimentary to the truthfulness of the Bella Coola, and to the respect they show for intangible property, that none of the myths recorded were *smaiasta* owned by others. Repeatedly an informant would say that he knew one, but would not tell it since it belonged to some other family.

After collecting a few myths, in each of which it was stated that the first settlers at village X were A, B, and C, with their sisters, P and Q, it seemed as if it would have been possible, before the culture of the Bella Coola had fallen into its present decay, to make a census of those whom they believe to have been first settlers of this earth, and that such a list would have had few contradictions. This was soon found to be false. Two myths may give different people as the first occupants of a certain village, nor does such contradiction trouble the Bella Coola. Each man, convinced of the authenticity of his own family account, is quite willing to believe that the one belonging to someone else is equally correct. This characteristic lack of logical consistency has already been mentioned in other connections. Boas (p. 61) likewise gives an instance of uncertainty as to the first occupants of a village, though, on the whole, he found Bella Coola mythology to be more codified than the present writer has done. In view of their lack of systematization in other matters, it would have been surprising if they had evolved a census of their first ancestors, accepted by all as accurate.

Another matter to be considered at this point is the similarity of detail in many myths. In part this can be explained

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cases though an infant in arms, though uninitiated, can be brought to dances by its mother; distinctions between rich and poor, slave and freeman, become of slight importance; all that really matters is whether a person is or is not a *kusiut*. Membership in the society seems to the uninitiated the most desirable thing in life, although their fears are always so strong that they never cease to dread actual admission. The feeling of class consciousness which exists in a somewhat mild form at other seasons of the year, gives place to a powerful sentiment of superiority on the part of members of the society over those who are not so fortunate. Even the respect normally shown to chiefs is submerged since they, too, are subject to the rule of the marshals.

Apart entirely from this attitude of superiority and inferiority, is the bond of fellowship engendered among members of the society by the rites. Whatever happens, the uninitiated *must* be deceived. Moreover, the psychological effect of gathering nightly in a body for a specific purpose is tremendous. Night after night they eat together; night after night they listen to the words of the marshals, who impress on them the need for co-operation and secrecy, who hold before them the good example set by their fellows who have carried out rites successfully, who emphasize the fact that they are doing as their fathers did. The ceremonial import is of greatest consequence at all these gatherings, but when the uninitiated have withdrawn the *kusiut* relax somewhat and enjoy themselves. The food itself is always of the best and some of the usual restrictions are removed. It is, for example, the only time that women are allowed to eat the flesh of seals. If this delicacy is provided the marshals enjoy the tidbits, but after Cannibals, novices, and others have received preferential treatment, the remainder is distributed to all and sundry.

It has been stated by some writers, especially those unfamiliar with the significance of native ceremonial life, that the dances of the coastal tribes are orgies of immorality. This point was investigated with care and it may be stated posi-

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tively that such is not the case among the Bella Coola. At the present time both drunkenness and vice are rampant, but neither of these practices is apparent on the nights when dances are taking place. The writer was present at many *kusiut* dances, in each case attended by practically every resident, and during them he saw only two drunken men. With regard to these, the sentiment of the influential members of the society was one of regret that the marshals could no longer exercise their prerogatives and punish the offenders. As several Bella Coola expressed it:

"Our dances are sacred and ceremonial, a drunken man spoils them."

As a rule they do not regard drunkenness as a serious vice, if a vice at all, hence this attitude was illuminating. It is more difficult to speak with certainty about morality; no breaches of it could have occurred at the ceremonies witnessed, nor was there any evidence that the excitement led to any licentious actions. On the whole, the dances are desirable since they provide a source of tremendous interest and importance. Vice flourishes with lassitude and boredom; anything that stimulates the people reduces it, and when the Bella Coola are engaged in ceremonial rites, the sentiment of the seniors of the community is strongly opposed to anything that interferes with the solemnity of the occasion.

There is no reason to suppose that these factors were not present in former times, more potent than now when belief in the supernatural powers of the *kukusiut* has passed away. The whole question of sexual morality at *kusiut* dances was investigated with considerable care.

One point emphasized by all Bella Coola was that no *kusiut* was allowed to have relations with an uninitiated person, whether his wife or not, during the period that his face was blackened and he was wearing a ceremonial collar. The reason for this prohibition seems to have been one not of morality, but of the necessity for preserving the dignity and secrecy of the *kusiut* society. An offender was punished by being struck

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by a marshal with a billet of firewood; such a blow was never repeated and might or might not cause death. The woman with whom the member had misdemeaned himself was either initiated at once or killed if her relatives could not provide a name and prerogative.

Restrictions between members of the society were less severe. Particularly during the long nights of *lnxtämem* and *nusiutälxap*, when only *kukusiut* were present and when men and women, often scantily clad, were closely associated, there seems to have been a certain amount of immorality. It was by no means a time of licence, nor was laxity encouraged by the marshals; intercourse between members of the society did not conflict with *kusiut* regulations, and was accordingly a matter that concerned the individuals alone.

Relations between the actual dancers and members of the other sex were formerly governed by strict rules, rigidly enforced by the marshals. After the coming of a call, a man could hold intercourse with a *kusiut*, provided that he did so in his own home, but in no other. But after *nəbusam*, when he left his house, continence was demanded until the end of the season and the burning of the enclosure-platform. The only exception to this rule was that if a second dancer received a call in the same house, the restrictions placed on the first were raised while the call was actually upon the second; that is, between *lnxtämem* and *nəbusam*. After that both were subject to strict continence, unless a third call came to the same dwelling. The Bella Coola of today offer no explanation for this law, save that disregard of it was displeasing to the supernatural beings. An offender in this case was likewise punished by being struck once by a marshal.

The religious aspects of the dances, as exemplified by the attitude of the Bella Coola to the masked figures and other phenomena, was described in the early part of this chapter, but additional observations may now be made. The writer realizes that the reader must find it difficult to understand how the uninitiated can be deluded into thinking that masked

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times, older relatives were revered, not only as senior members of the ancestral family, but as those most familiar with myths and other cherished possessions. With the spread of new ideas, the young people no longer respect the loree of their elders, and consequently do not heed their admonitionns and advice. Theoretically, such self-reliance would seem dessirable, but in practice it has led to unfortunate results. A ycoung man, considering himself superior to the older people, gloories in acting on his own initiative, but too often he lacks the rrequisite strength of character to guide his own life. If he wishhes to drink, he does so; if he desires to marry, he chooses hiss mate without considering the transmission of ancestral rights which stabilized unions in former times; if he tires of his wiife, he deserts her for another; if he cheats or steals, he is no ldonger restrained by relatives who fear disgrace. The elders, incapable of stemming the tide, watch sadly and ask seriously whhether the coming of the white man has brought compensationn for the loss it has caused. It is deplorable that the emancipoation of the younger men and women has taken place before the development of the sense of individual responsibility annd conscience which public opinion formerly rendered less neceessary. Christianity provides a moral code for those who are fully converted, but for the many in the transition stage, the breeak-down of the old system of family influence has been tragic.

Profound religious beliefs and lack of individual initiative are shared by all Bella Coola with the exception, perhaps, of a few of the younger people who, having beeen educated at white man's schools, have adopted the new outlook unconditionally. In most characteristics they display as widde variability as any other people. In truthfulness, for exampple, they range from one extreme to the other. As the writer bbecame familiar with the older men, he found it possible to reccognize without difficulty the strength of some and the weakneess of others. There are liars, but they can be easily detected owing to their lack of finesse. It is a pleasure to record the reliabbility of the author's friends and informants. Their veracity was checked repeat-

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577 edly until complete confidence was established, simplifying
[124] work in the field to an enormous extent. Equal trust could be placed on these men in other respects; articles of value were repeatedly left in their houses with the absolute certainty that they would be guarded with care. Some few individuals there were, however, who were neither honest nor trustworthy.
[771] Bella Coola religion is not concerned with ethics, but public
626 opinion demands honour in dealing with relatives or friends.
577 In former times, for example, debts incurred by an individual
[426] were considered a liability by his relations. If a man died after
[602] buying goods on credit for a potlatch, his family were disgraced
[177] if they failed to pay his bills; now, unfortunately, nothing constrains the younger people, many of whom try to avoid settling even their own debts, much less those of dead relatives. Individual conscience has not replaced the tribal and, more specifically, family influence. Dishonesty in small matters is not
[648] uncommon, particularly in dealing with white people who,
[177] according to the Bella Coola, were the first to transgress. The older people bitterly lament the lack of morality of the younger and state, probably with entire justification, that they would have been prevented by the open life which prevailed when several families shared a single house. On the whole, however, the average Bella Coola is probably no less honest than the average white man.

153 Individuals vary enormously in mental ability. In making
124 this investigation, it was necessary to interview all the older people of the tribe. Disregarding those unwilling to provide information, it was found that some absolutely lacked the ability to explain matters with which they were familiar; some did not have sufficient patience to be good teachers; some were so forgetful that they would omit necessary points in a story or account; some were downright stupid, whereas others displayed mental ability of no mean order. In reading ethnological literature, one is apt to think of the troubles experienced by the author, and to overlook the fact that natives have as

sionally, in a half-hearted manner, but it is not unusual for a man to allow the basin of water in which he makes his ablutions to remain standing for two or three weeks. Not many years ago the Carriers taught their neighbours to make a kind of soap from the ashes of burnt cottonwood sticks thrown into water; with this clothes are washed irregularly and in most cases from sheer necessity only. In former times bathing was a semi-sacred rite, but this fell into disuse with the passing of the old religion, and the use of soap and water merely for the sake of cleanliness has not become a daily habit. The women have more vanity; the younger girls especially like to have new clothes, though they wear them carelessly, heedless of fit. An effort is often made to clean up for ceremonial dances, but it entails little more than the removal of the more obvious dirt and the putting on, over unchanged undergarments, of a sweater. Pride in personal appearance, love of tidiness, delight in a clean house, are all quite foreign to the Bella Coola.

Probably the reason for lack of comforts in the houses is simply that the people do not feel the need for them. They consider it no hardship to sit on a rickety chair, scoop up food from a common dish and, if they think of it, throw morsels down to the dog or the cat. The smell, the flies, the dirt, the chaos do not concern them. Capable of undergoing privations, hardships, and even sufferings, they think neither of the comfort of themselves nor of others. Their domestic animals are often treated abominably, not through lack of affection or cruelty, but from callousness. More than once the writer has seen a favourite dog steal a piece of food from the table. Its master, after a furious blow or kick at it, would suddenly, as if by inspiration, throw a choice bit to the animal, saying:

"Why, he must have been hungry!"

Though the Bella Coola feel a kinship with animals unknown to the white man, it is not combined with any recognition of their feelings as living creatures. There are, of course, many exceptions, but on the whole public opinion demands generosity and kindness only towards human members of the group. The moral code is not concerned with animals.